

transforming generosity

The Quiet Promise of Jesus' Kingdom

CHRIST THE KING

BY THE REV. CHARLES BAREBO



Standing in a dirt road in Kajo Keji, South Sudan, I am immersed in a surreal scene. There are no paved roads, no electricity, no cars, no internet, and no cell service. Surrounded by a leper, a cripple, a blind grandmother being led by her granddaughter, it is as if I am walking through a scene in the gospels.

Our diocese has finished building our third primary school in the county, and we are there to officially hand the keys over to their bishop and the village elders. Their joy, our joy, is indescribable. There is a feeling of electricity in the air. That feeling, of course, is love and New Hope for their beloved. The opening of this school, this gift from Bethlehem (Pennsylvania) to the people of Dwani, South Sudan, is a gift of unheard extravagance. And the poorest people on the earth proceed to give us a prize ram. Their gift of transformational generosity let us feed the war orphans at St. Bartholomew's orphanage meat that night. Perhaps more importantly, their gift changed my heart forever.

Today's gospel sees Jesus talking about his kingdom, that it's not from this world. That's worth some thought. We get so caught up in mankind's world that we might miss the quiet whisper in Jesus' invitation. In our mad rush of email, social media, our addiction to electronics, we look completely past the kingdom built of love. If we stay focused on this world we will feel that we will never have enough money, things, or happiness.

But Jesus' quiet promise of this other kingdom, his kingdom, gives us pause for thought, pause for hope. Jesus has come to give evidence of the truth. And the truth is that we are children of God and created in and by God's love. The truth is that our focus on possessions and obsession with scarcity deny God's love and the relationship that is our heritage. The truth is that the best way to follow Christ is to give, give our love. That by giving we walk in Jesus' footsteps. We live out our call to discipleship.

Through all the pain and the suffering, John wants us to see that the Truth is standing in front of Pilate in person. That the Truth will trade his life for Barabbas and for us. This is what the Truth is and does. The Truth is what Jesus is. And in an act of transformational generosity, Jesus is giving his life for the world. And for you and me.

Charlie Barebo is the Missioner for Stewardship and Development for the Diocese of Bethlehem and chair of the New Hope Campaign, which has raised almost \$5 million for projects in KajoKeji, South Sudan.

For reflection ...

- ❖ When have you accepted Jesus' invitation to be a part of his kingdom? How did that feel?
- ❖ How do you claim God's love?
- ❖ When you make a gift, are you aware of the transformation that is/has taken place? Can you describe it?

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